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H. H. ASQUITH ON VERGIL, SOPHOCLES, AND TACITUS

In 1924 the George H. Doran Company (New York) published, or, rather, republished, a volume entitled *Studies and Sketches*, by the "Rt. Hon. H. H. Asquith . . . Hon. Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford" (Pp. 212). Several essays in this volume are of direct interest to lovers of the Classics: X. The "Antigone" (155-164); XI. The Art of Tacitus (167-170); XII. The Age of Demosthenes (173-182).

Mr. Asquith, who from 1908 to 1916 was Prime Minister of England, and later was the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, had a notable career at Oxford. Though he does not say so directly in his interesting work, *Memories and Reflections 1852-1927*¹, in his chapter on Oxford (1.17-30), it is plain enough that he devoted at Oxford considerable attention to the Classics. In her autobiography², "Margot Asquith" several times speaks of him, incidentally, as an excellent classical scholar. On October 9, 1908, as President of The Classical Association of England and Wales, Mr. Asquith delivered an address on Classical Culture. This was reprinted, from the Birmingham Post of October 10, 1908, in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 2. 74-77.

On pages 97-111 of *Studies and Sketches* one finds an essay entitled *Sir Henry Wotton, With Some General Reflections on Style in English Poetry*. This was delivered, on May 30, 1919, as a "Presidential Address to the English Association". On page 105 Mr. Asquith speaks of the two poems that, in his judgment, give Wotton his immortality. These are lines on Elizabeth of Bohemia ("written probably in 1619"), and *The Character of a Happy Life* ("a little earlier in date"). On page 106 Mr. Asquith asks, ". . . What is that peculiar quality which has given these pieces their enduring power of appeal to every successive generation among the lovers of poetry? . . ." After quoting a stanza of each poem he proceeds thus:

If I may answer my own question, I should say it is that they possess the sovereign quality of Style. Style in poetry, even more perhaps than in prose, is an art, even an artifice; it is sought out, thought out, wrought out. It does not fetter inspiration, though you may have inspiration without it. It is both a vesture and a vehicle; incommunicable, almost indefinable, never mistakable. It is best understood not by description or by analysis, but by illustration. Among all the Classical poets, whether Greek or Latin, Virgil is the great example. . . .

"Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt;"³

or,

¹Boston, Little, Brown, and Company, 1928. Pp. xix+337; vi+326. This work, though written by the Earl of Oxford and Asquith, was not published till after his death.

²Margot Asquith, *An Autobiography* (New York, George H. Doran Company; four volumes, 1920, 1920, 1922, 1922).

³Aeneid 1.462.

"Di Iovis in tectis iram miserantur inanem amborum, et tantos mortalibus esse labores;"⁴ or again,

"Dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum accolet, imperiumque pater Romanus habebit."⁵

What a difference is there, not only from the simplicity, the chaste economy, the severe restraint, of the greatest Greek models, but from the strained points, the almost iridescent glitter, the tumid verbiage, of even the best of the rhetorical poets of the Silver Age!

Mr. Asquith then illustrated his point about style in poetry by references to Shakespeare, Keats, and Tennyson. He concludes as follows (111):

. . . <Sir Henry Wotton> was not, either as a man or as a poet, of heroic stature, or of far-reaching range. But he was an artist to the core, and in these days when to an old-fashioned ear there seems a fine, and now and again an almost arrogant, disorder in some of the outpourings of the contemporary muse, it may not be amiss to go back to the studied efforts of the masters of Poetic Style.

In his essay on The "Antigone" Mr. Asquith gave first a brief outline of the play, and then an equally brief hint of the view Sophocles meant his hearers to take of Antigone's conduct⁶. On pages 159-163 he writes as follows:

. . . But Jebb will undoubtedly carry conviction with most readers, in the subtle and cogent argument by which he seeks to demonstrate that our sympathies are intended, when the climax of the play is reached, to be wholeheartedly with Antigone.

Upon this, the main problem, there is nothing new to be said, but there are one or two subsidiary points which are of interest to students of the ancient world.

There is a strong political undercurrent in the drama. One cannot indeed help suspecting, now and again, that Sophocles was playing to the Athenian gallery. We know that in fact the poet was in the next year (442 B.C.) elected one of the Ten Generals, and took part as such in an expedition against Samos: and the tradition is that he owed his appointment to the success of the *Antigone*. There is throughout the play a constant implied contrast between despot-ridden Thebes and free Athens. The Chorus of local Theban Magnates imagine that they have been summoned by the new king to a special council—the term (*σύνκλητος*) being applied at Athens to meetings of the Ecclesia convoked to deal with some matter of emergency.

Creon soon undeceives them. He informs them that in the exercise of his undoubted prerogative, he has issued the edict which forbids the burial of Polynices. Their business is not to discuss or criticize, but simply to avoid connivance with any who may be tempted to disobey. The Chorus—with the servile acquiescence which an Athenian would expect in a City under the yoke of despotic rule—meekly assent: "it is for thee to give thy orders, both for the dead and the living." There is a coarse strain in the typical despot, Creon, who is always suspecting that any opposition to his will

⁴Aeneid 10.758-759 (in the original the passage is wrongly given as 0.758-759).

⁵Aeneid 9.448-449.

⁶I may refer to a paper of my own, *A Point in the Interpretation of the Antigone of Sophocles*, *The American Journal of Philology* 37 (1916), 300-316. See also *ibidem*, 393-401, 434-435.

must be due to some form of bribery. When the Guard—"a country bumpkin," as an acute critic has said, with almost a Shakespearean touch about him—has at last made an end of his tale of the finding of the corpse sprinkled with dust, the Chorus timidly suggests that this may be the work of the Gods (. . . 278). Creon curses them as fools and dotards; and, in a long tirade, declares that the doer must have been paid by the disaffected in the City. Even when the venerable soothsayer, Tiresias, comes later on to warn and threaten him, he is bold enough at first to insinuate the same charge, in the insolent words: "The prophet-tribe was ever fond of money."

The most remarkable illustration of this feature in the play is the dialogue between Creon and his son Haemon, the betrothed of Antigone, for whom he comes to plead (v. 631-780)—but not on personal grounds: "No marriage (says the dutiful son) shall be deemed by me a greater gain than thy good guidance." Creon proceeds to deliver him a long lecture, in the true tyrant's vein, on the supreme duty of obedience (*πειθαρχία*) to the head, whether of a household or a State. "We must support the cause of order, and not be worsted by a woman." Haemon's reply is, in effect, that public opinion in the City is wholly on the side of Antigone, and that it is Creon's own interest, as despot, to revoke the sentence. Creon angrily asks: "Shall Thebes prescribe to me how I must rule?" and Haemon replies, in the famous line, which sums up the creed of Athenian democracy: "That is no City (*πόλις*) which belongs to one man". Haemon (it has been well said) pleads with his father as a democrat and not as a lover. It is only when he finds Creon inexorable that his passion breaks through, and he rushes off the stage declaring that he will kill himself. It is this which prompts the Chorus to the marvellous Ode on the unconquerableness of Love: perhaps the only choral Ode in the play which has any direct relevance to what is going on. The others, fine as some of them are, are patchwork relics of the conventional dithyramb.

That Haemon loved Antigone is thus made plain, but did Antigone love Haemon? If she did (and I will in a moment discuss the only evidence which the play affords) her love for him did not affect the resolve which led her to dare Creon, and to meet her doom. In a sense, love was her motive. She would never have risked the penalties of disobeying Creon's ordinance, for an unbred stranger. If the corpse of Polynices had been that of any other of the gallant Argive invaders, she would, in face of Creon's edict, have remained passive, and (as Hegel seems to think she ought to have done in any case) left the situation to the Gods. Quite early in the Prologue she discloses her real motive to Ismene: "I shall rest, a loved one, with him (my brother) whom I have loved, sinless in my crime. . ."; or, as she says in almost her last words, "by piety. . . (i.e., to my dead brother), I have earned the name of impious. . ." <924>.

Where then does her love for Haemon come in? My answer is—Nowhere. I believe Sophocles rightly left it out of the case. Antigone is by no means a flawless sentimental heroine. In both her dialogues with Ismene, she becomes at moments hard and even virulent. What evidence is there that Sophocles intended to suggest that any personal feeling for Haemon entered into her thoughts?

Here I write with diffidence: for I am forced into reluctant disagreement with that supreme scholar and most accomplished critic, Sir Richard Jebb.

Ismene, having tardily but heroically associated herself with her sister when Antigone's "holy crime" had been discovered, in her pleading with Creon for the first time introduces Haemon's name (v. 568), "But wilt thou slay the betrothed of thy own son?" Creon (after a brutal interposition) replies, "I like not an evil wife for my son." Then follows the line, "Haemon, beloved. How thy father wrongs thee!" which is given

by all the MSS. to Ismene. But the modern Editors trampling on this uniform reading, have⁷, for purely psychological reasons, transferred it to Antigone, who, for the first and last and only time in the play, is made by them to confess her love for Haemon. To my mind the MSS. are evidently right, and the Editors are wrong. The transference (so it seems to me) does injustice to the art of Sophocles. When at last Antigone is led forth to her doom, there is something quite impersonal in her lament that she goes to the grave unwedded (v. 876-943). This is especially marked in the most moving of her farewell speeches: "O tomb, O bridal chamber" (v. 891). Her last words are: "See what I suffer, and from whom; the champion of piety" (*εὐσεβεία*, v. 943).

In the essay on the Art of Tacitus Mr. Asquith writes as follows (167-170):

An English scholar can hardly undertake a more arduous enterprise than the translation of the "Annals of Tacitus". . . . The difficulty is not to reproduce what Tacitus says, but the way in which he says it. . . . it is probable that few authors have produced so vivid and lasting an impression with so small a stock of original ideas. Nor, again, has his style any of the unconscious grace, the delicate and unpremeditated subtleties, which fill with despair the translator of Plato or Catullus. All his effects are nicely calculated, his moral indignation is never riotous or diffuse, and he brands a character or blasts a reputation with the stately and official malevolence of a Republican Censor.

But though he is in a sense the most artificial of writers, though his tricks of style are transparent, and his mannerisms inveterate and obtrusive, though, in a word, he exhibits in their most striking form many of the most vicious characteristics of the Silver Age, he yet handles the Latin language in a manner and with an effect entirely beyond the reach of his contemporaries. . . .

. . . Tacitus alone among the writers of his time had the eye and hand of a literary artist, and knew how to produce that kind of illusion which requires for its creation imaginative no less than intellectual power. He is second to none of them as a phrasemonger and epigrammatist, but he possesses at the same time a faculty which they are one and all without—the sense of proportion to which a distorted perspective is an eye-sore, and the creative instinct which elaborates and adapts the details of a picture with reference to a single purpose and a central figure. It is this which gives to the staple of his work so permanent and engrossing an interest. Were the style less skilfully managed, we should be alternately wearied and irritated by the writer's spurious Republicanism, his Stoic platitudes, his aristocratic bile; by the perversity which leads him to confuse the extinction of an oligarchy with the death of freedom, by his unique proficiency in all the arts which are taught and learned in the school for scandal. That he never produces such an effect upon the mind of the reader, at least at the first perusal, is wholly due to his peculiar literary art. There is a dramatic unity and completeness in his work which makes each scene necessary to the whole, and the dexterity with which the several parts are adjusted and balanced allows no opportunity for the criticism which any one of them by itself would provoke. The description of character and policy, the analysis of motives, and the illustration of general laws all go on together, and so well are they combined, that it is almost impossible to rise from the book without the persuasion that Tiberius was a villain, Germanicus a hero of the antique type, and the organized tyranny and extortion of the old senatorial

⁷By a curious misprint the original runs thus: "But the modern Editors' trampling on this uniform reading, have. . ."

rule an ideal machinery for the production of public virtue.

In his essay on The Age of Demosthenes (173-182), an essay first published in The Spectator, March 3, 1877, Mr. Asquith declares (176) that our estimate of the statesmanship of Demosthenes must depend on the answer which we give to two questions—first, were the liberties of Greece, as he conceived them, and as they existed in his time, worth preserving? and second, was their preservation possible?

The answers to these questions are both in the negative (177-182). When Mr. Asquith wrote them, he was a young man of twenty-five, with his career before him. When he reprinted them, he had had a long and distinguished career, in high places, as lawyer and as statesman. The answers are, therefore, worthy of careful consideration.

CHARLES KNAPP

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS IN PETRONIUS AND ITALIAN SUPERSTITIONS OF TO-DAY¹

The work of Petronius is an almost inexhaustible mine of information about a great variety of superstitions of the Roman people. In this paper I do not intend to treat all the superstitions mentioned by Petronius, or even most of them; but, since I know at first hand the life of a section of the Italian country people, I shall limit myself to the superstitions which, in some form or other, survive in the provincial life of Southern Italy and Sicily.

The strangest superstition related by Petronius is that concerning the werewolf (61-62). At the banquet given by Trimalchio, Niceros, yielding to the request of his host that he should entertain the company with some true story, told about the mysterious transformation of a soldier into a wolf which he had witnessed one night when, escorted by the soldier, he was going to the farm-house of a certain woman. The moon was shining brightly. As they were passing a cemetery, the soldier, having undressed himself, placed his garments beside the road, and then *circumminxit vestimenta sua*. All of a sudden he became a wolf and fled howling into the woods. Niceros found his friend's garments changed into stone. Terrified, he drew his sword, and, as he went on, he hacked away at the shadows, till he reached the farm-house. There he was told that a wolf had entered the fold, and had bitten all the sheep, and that the beast had been wounded in the neck by one of the slaves. On his way back, Niceros found that the place where he had seen the soldier's clothes transformed into stone was marked with blood. At home he found the soldier lying in bed with a wound in his neck, and then he realized that the soldier was a *versipellis*.

The guests at Trimalchio's table were filled with astonishment. Trimalchio believed the story; Petronius makes him say (63.2), . . . *mihi pili inhorruerunt, quia scio Niceronem nihil nugarum narrare: immo certus est et minime linguosus*².

The superstition about the werewolf is still widely spread in Italy. The werewolf is called *lepomene* in some parts of Italy, *lupo mannaro* in others; but the characteristics attributed to him are nearly the same all over the country. A *lupo mannaro* is conceived by the people as an unfortunate human being who is subject to evil influences from the moon when it changes from one phase to another; at such times he is supposed to be seized by some furious madness, which forces him to throw himself on the ground, roll about, and howl like a wolf. Though it is not believed that he becomes a real wolf, his instincts are said to become wolfish and his nails suddenly to grow to an enormous length. The influence of the moon upon the *versipellis* is, I think, alluded to by Petronius in Niceros's remark (62.4): . . . *luna lucebat tamquam meridie*.

Almost every Italian town has several persons who are believed to be *lupi mannari*. Usually they are solitary men, who, because of their mode of living, arouse suspicion among their neighbors. In some parts of Italy it is believed that all those who are born on Christmas night become *lupi mannari*³. During the changes of the moon *lupi mannari* are believed to go out of their houses, late at night, and to roll about on the pavements of the streets, howling like wolves. Any person who happens to meet an enraged *lupo mannaro* must either run away or must violently attack him with some weapon, to make him bleed and so to relieve him, temporarily, of his madness.

Many stories are told to children about the cruelties committed by *lupi mannari*, with the warning not to stay out of doors after the Ave Maria. When I was a child, I was told a story about a *lupo mannaro* of my own town (near Palermo). During one of his nightly wanderings through the deserted streets this *lupo mannaro*, who was a poor shoemaker, went to scratch at the door of a neighbor. The neighbor, awakened by the noise, appeared at the window, and, seeing the monster below, threw a flower-pot at him with telling force. The next morning blood stains were seen in the street, and it became known to the people that the shoemaker was lying in bed with a wound in the neck.

Saverio La Sorsa tells a story⁴ about a *lepomene*, who, having revealed to his wife the evil with which he was afflicted, warned her that, when he went out of the house, under no circumstances should she open the door to him until he had knocked three times, and that then she should have ready a tub of cold water into which he could plunge himself and so be freed from his madness. But one night the husband, still in his abnormal state, came home, and, with loud howlings, knocked at the door. The wife was moved with pity for him, and, neglecting his warning, opened the door to him. The *lepomene* rushed upon her and wildly tore her to pieces with his wolfish claws.

Lepomeni are considered irresponsible for their acts. When they return to their normal condition, they do not recall what happened to them during their madness. A friend of mine from a town near Benevento has told

¹Petronius will be quoted from the text of Franz Buecheler, sixth edition, by W. Heraeus (Berlin, Weidmann, 1922).

²On the werewolf see Kirby Flower Smith, An Historical Study of the Werewolf in Literature, Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, New Series, 2 (1894), 1-42. C.K.>.

³See Saverio La Sorsa, Superstizioni, Pregiudizi e Credenze Popolari Pugliesi, in *Lares* 4 (1915), 54. The article covers pages 49-67 (the periodical is published at Rome).

⁴*Ibidem*, 54-55.

me that, in his native place, *lupi mannari* are believed to go out naked at night and to bathe themselves in the public fountains.

After the horrifying story of the werewolf, Trimalchio is stimulated to narrate, himself, a *res horribilis*, of which, as he affirms, he had been an eye-witness *cum adhuc capillatus <esset>*. He was in the house of a woman who was lamenting the death of her only son, when some witches approached the house. A tall, courageous Cappadocian, who, with Trimalchio and other friends, was mourning for the dead child, drew his sword and, running out after the witches, stabbed one of them. When he returned from his attack, he was livid as if he had been scourged: he had been touched by a *mala manus* (63.7). The mourners, who had gone to the door to see the fight, now closed the door and resumed their mourning. But, to the surprise of all, when the mother went to embrace the corpse of her son, she found only a bundle of straw; the corpse had been stolen by the witches. Trimalchio concludes his story by warning his guests that there are nocturnal witches—Nocturnae—; . . . quod sursum est, deorsum faciunt, he says (63.9). Trimalchio's guests are terrified; all kiss the tables and pray to the Nocturnae not to trouble them on their way home (64.1). To us this story seems impossible; yet, were I to tell it to a group of country-people in Southern Italy, I should make on them about the same impression that Trimalchio made on his guests, and I should see them act in a similar manner. I should see them cross themselves and earnestly pray to their patron saints or to all the saints to protect them against attacks from witches, evil spirits, enemies, and what not.

The word *striga* is related to *strix*, 'an owl'. According to ancient fables, the *strix* sucked the blood of children in their cradles; indeed, one of the evil powers of a *striga* (*strega* in Italian) is supposed to be the power to suck the blood of people, especially of children. An Italian mother whose child is anaemic may be heard saying that her child has been bewitched, "stregato". A witch's powers are supposed to be very great, in fact almost unlimited. She can arouse storms on land and on sea, and produce epidemics; she can cause diseases and death to children, or mysteriously kidnap them; she can make girls grow bald, and can mar their beauty in many other ways. She can harm a person whom she has never seen by merely having a description of him and knowing his name; if she comes in possession of something belonging to that person, as for instance, a handkerchief or a necktie, she has power of life and death over him. Oenothra's declaration of her personal supernatural powers (135.12) well corresponds to what an equally subtle would-be witch of to-day would say of her own⁶.

Who are believed to be witches? Certain women are suspected of having secret connections with some kind of supernatural evil power. They are consulted about

all the vicissitudes of life and also give prescriptions and remedies for physical and spiritual ailments. Witches have always been conceived of as old and ugly women. All the witches mentioned by Petronius are *anus*: . . . cum illa intervenit comitem aniculum trahens. . . (131.2); . . . intravit. . . anus laceratis crinibus nigraque veste deformis, extraque vestibulum me iniecta manu duxit. . . (133.4). Oenothra, also, is an *anus*: . . . anum. . . inspicere diligentius coepi . . . (135.1).

After a bath, Trimalchio led his guests into another triclinium, where his wife, Fortunata, had prepared appetizing viands. To incite them to eat and revel till the next morning, he said that on that day one of his slaves had shaved his beard for the first time. While he was speaking, a rooster crowed. In fear, he ordered his slaves to pour some wine under the tables; at the same time he changed a ring from his left hand to his right, saying that the rooster's crowing was an evil omen, which meant that either a house would burn down or some person in that neighborhood would soon die. He promised a gift, *corollarium*, to any one who should bring him the rooster; when the animal was brought to him, he ordered it to be killed to drive away the evil that was threatening some household, perhaps his own (73.6, 74.1-4). All the superstitions mentioned or implied in this little mock-heroic episode—the pouring of wine as a good omen, the touching of the ring as an amulet, and the killing of the rooster to drive away the evil presaged by his crowing—are, with slight variations, still common in the every-day life of the Italian country people. The spilling of wine is considered a very good omen, foreboding joy and prosperity; the spilling of oil, on the other hand, is believed to presage misfortune. Trimalchio's touching of the ring as a protection against evil corresponds to the common people's superstition of touching iron whenever they see a *iettatore* (a person who is believed to possess the 'evil eye'), and when they pronounce or hear the word 'death'. In his article, *Superstizioni e Pregiudizi Lucchesi*⁶, Idelfonso Nieri says that in some parts of Tuscany, if a hen is heard cackling like a rooster, it must be killed at once; otherwise the head of the family which owns it will soon die. In Sicily the crowing of a rooster at an unusual hour is considered a bad omen; when it is heard at night, it is supposed to forecast rain for the morrow.

Another superstition mentioned by Petronius is of the kind which appeals strongly to the imagination—the finding of a treasure. One of Trimalchio's guests, describing to Encolpius the happy lot of the host's freedmen, points to one of them and whispers (38.7-8): . . . De nihilo crevit. Modo solebat collo suo ligna portare, sed, quomodo dicunt—ego nihil scio, sed audivi—quom Incuboni pilleum rapuisset, thesaurum invenit. . . . The superstition about mysterious findings of treasures as believed in our own day is fundamentally like that of the Roman people. This superstition is very common among the Italian country

⁶On the *strix* see articles by Professor Samuel Grant Oliphant, as follows: The Story of the Strix: Ancient, Transactions of the American Philological Association 44 (1913), 133-149 (on pages 144-145 Professor Oliphant discusses the Petronius passage); The Story of the Strix: Isidorus and the Glossographers, *ibidem*, 45 (1914), 49-63. C. K. >

⁶See Atti della Reale Accademia Lucchese di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti 35(1919), 361. The article covers pages 345-393 (the periodical is published at Lucca).

people; almost any person can tell a story about it. In my native town there lived a poor old mason who boasted that he could discover treasures hidden by spirits. When some one, sceptically inclined, asked him why he had secured no treasures for himself, the mason replied that in every attempt he had made to get hidden gold for himself he had failed because his partners—he needed, at least, one helper—had plotted to kill him soon after the discovery and to rob him of his share of the treasure. Thus, because of their deceitful attitude toward him, they frustrated the effect of his magic words.

Of the many stories which I have heard about finding treasures, one about a cobbler and a corpse seems to me to be the most characteristic; it most clearly resembles the story suggested by Trimalchio's guest. A poor cobbler used to go, two or three days a week, from his village to a neighboring town in search of work. On one of his trips to that town, he made nothing the whole day; at night, since he disliked to go home to his wife and children with empty hands, he decided to remain in that town, hoping to have better fortune the next day. Being unable to pay for lodgings, he asked an old woman if she knew some person who would be willing to give him free accommodation for the night. The woman pointed out to him a deserted house, which was believed to be haunted, in which, as she said, he would be allowed by the owner to stay free of charge, since no one else dared to live there. Having no better course to follow, the cobbler immediately secured permission to pass the night in the house. When he saw the desolate and squalid condition of its rooms, he remembered what the woman had told him about it. He trembled a little, but resolved to remain there, and to keep a wax candle lighted during the night⁷. At midnight, he was still awake and staring at the flickering candle. All of a sudden, the light was blown out, and a strange noise, as of sliding tiles, was heard in a corner of the room. A mysterious voice cried, 'Oh! Oh! I am falling, I am falling, I am falling'. The poor cobbler was frightened, but did not stir. The unknown voice repeated the cry three times, and the man, taking courage, said in a whisper, 'Break your neck'. He had scarcely pronounced these words when a bier with a corpse on it, carried on the shoulders of three men, appeared. Seeing them, the cobbler, in his desire to help them, went and put his shoulder under the unsupported fourth corner of the bier⁸. As the cobbler touched the bier, it crumbled to the ground, transformed into a pile of gold pieces. The man kept the matter secret, and afterwards bought the haunted house and, with all his family, established himself there. The people were surprised at the sudden good fortune of the cobbler, and everybody whispered, though no one was sure, that he had found a treasure in the house.

When Encolpius went to Trimalchio's house, he saw in its portico a niche in which was kept the Lares (in

silver) and a marble statue of Venus, the patroness of Trimalchio (29.8). In most of the poor people's homes in Italy to-day one will find a niche containing a stucco statuette of the Virgin or some other saint, representing the patron or the patroness of the household. The houses of the rich have small chapels dedicated to their patron saints in which the religious ceremonies of the family are celebrated.

A very common superstition among the Romans was that about lucky and unlucky days. The wealthy and eccentric Trimalchio had his lucky and his unlucky days, which had been discovered for him through a study of the course of the moon and of the motions of the stars, portrayed on a tablet which was hung on one of the door-posts of his dining-room, that he might be able to read them every day. This superstition is even to-day almost universal among the Italian country people. The thirteenth, the seventeenth, and the Fridays of every month are unlucky for all superstitious persons. A Friday falling on the thirteenth or on the seventeenth day of a month is a most unlucky day; no superstitious person would start on a trip or undertake an enterprise on such a day. Furthermore, the day of Saints Filippo and Giacomo, May 1, is considered in towns near Palermo very unlucky, because on that day all the devils of hell are believed to be let loose in the world and to cause great trouble and misfortune. On that day one must be very careful when he is walking, going up or down a staircase, riding a horse, climbing a tree, and the like, for a fall on that day would mean serious injury, the fracture of a limb or even death.

At the entrance of Trimalchio's dining-room a boy was standing whose only task was to warn incoming guests to cross the threshold with the right foot first—*dextro pede* (30.5). It was considered an evil omen to step into the triclinium with the left foot first; Encolpius and his friends, Petronius says, trembled a little for fear they would walk in contrary to the warning. Of this superstition there is no trace, as far as I know, in Sicily and Southern Italy, but in a slightly different form it survives in some parts of Tuscany. There, when the bride enters the new house, she must be careful not to cross the threshold with the left foot first, for, if she does so, she will be unhappy in her marriage⁹.

In addressing Agamemnon, one of his guests, Trimalchio told a little story about the Sibyl, which, apparently, has no logical connection with what he had been saying (48.8): . . . *Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et, cum illi pueri dicerent, Σίβυλλα, τί θέλεις, respondebat illa, ἀποθαμείν θέλω*. This story, however, is not, perhaps, a nonsensical product of Trimalchio's imagination; it may be based on some popular superstition. It is possible that in Cumae, the legendary abode of the famous Sibyl, there was somebody who exhibited, for a trifling sum of money, an *ampulla* containing a figure which he gave out to be the ancient and mythical prophetess; by some legerdemain, perhaps, he made the people who came to see it believe that it could speak. Trimalchio's brief statement about the Sibyl does not tell us what

⁷ In this connection one may read, with interest, Pliny, Epistles 7. 27. C. K.

⁸ In almost all the small towns and villages of Italy no hearse is used to carry the dead to the cemetery. A bier is used; this is carried by four men on their shoulders.

⁹ Idelfonso, page 353 of the article mentioned above, in note 6.

use, if any, was made of her. We can well imagine that this supposed Sibylla may have been exploited as an instrument for telling fortunes, in the manner in which some modern fortune-tellers who travel from one town to another in Italy use the Cartesian Devil. The Cartesian Devil is a small, hollow figure of crystal kept in a bowl filled with water and covered with a piece of parchment. By pressing this parchment, the fortune-teller causes the small figure in the bowl to go down; by stopping the pressure he causes it to come up again. This little physical device is used to impress those who are attracted by its novelty. The Devil, however, is not supposed to have any influence in prophesying the future. The fortunes of the people are written on small slips of paper contained in two receptacles (one for women's fortunes, the other for men's), from which the fortunes are brought out by some trained bird, usually, a parrot or a canary, or by means of some mechanical contrivance.

The superstition attached to numbers in general and to the number three in particular was widely spread among the Romans and other peoples of antiquity. The number three was considered remarkable in religion, magic, witchcraft, and mathematics. Petronius mentions the superstition about the number three in connection with magic and witchcraft—. . . *ter me iussit expuere terque lapillos conicere in sinum. . .* (131.5)—, and with the people's daily life—. . . *amica se non dimisisset nisi tribus potionibus e lege siccatis. . .* (136.11). Apparently, in drinking it was a custom for the Romans to imbibe three glasses. This number is still considered a magic, mystic number, and has great importance in the minds of many people. The superstition connected with the number three in past and present times has been fully investigated by scholars¹⁰; consequently, I shall not say anything more about it.

After a bitter criticism of the high cost of living and the corruption of public officials, Ganymedes, one of Trimalchio's guests, says that all the evils of the people are due to the general lack of religious feeling and reverence for the gods; he complacently recalls the good old times, when . . . *stolatae ibant nudis pedibus in clivum, pasis capillis, mentibus puris, et Iovem aquam exorabant. Itaque statim urceatim plovebat—aut tunc aut nunquam—et omnes redibant udi tanquam mures. Itaque dii pedes lanatos habent, quia nos religiosi non sumus* (44.18)¹¹. This reference must not be understood to allude to the well-known custom existing in Rome, but to a similar custom common in the place where the speaker, Ganymedes, was living, that is, in some country-town in Southern Italy. From this information in Petronius it is evident that the country people of Southern Italy used to perform, in Roman times, certain religious ceremonies in honor of Jupiter when they needed rain for their fields, and that by so doing they hoped to obtain—nay, were sure they would obtain—rain. In Southern Italy, where rains

were, as they still are, scarce in spring and in autumn, people must have appealed very often to Jupiter for showers.

This superstition of country-people is still common, in an almost unchanged form, in Sicily. In my native town, a few miles from Palermo, nearly every year, in spring and in autumn, the farmers have recourse to a saint, the Madonna delle Grazie, hoping thus to obtain rain for their parched fields. On such occasions, men and women, the most devout, barefooted, go in procession, with a priest at their head, praying for rain all along the way, to the Church of the Madonna, which is situated in the country-side, about half a mile from the town; they carry the image of the saint to the town and processionally go about through the streets, sincerely believing that the Madonna will hearken to their prayers and send the needed rain. Old people say that often rain has fallen while they were carrying the saint in procession. When rain is not obtained so readily, the image of the saint is kept in the main Church of the town until showers, finally (too late, perhaps, to be helpful), fall. The people, however, remember the instances in which their prayers, they say, have been satisfied, and rain has fallen and saved their crops; they are more likely to forget the occasions on which, notwithstanding all their prayers and vows, their crops have been ruined for lack of rain. Hence their faith in the pluvial powers of their Madonna is unshakable.

COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK,
BROOKLYN CENTER

ANTHONY RINI

REVIEW

C. Suetoni Tranquilli De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus Edidit, Apparatu et Commentario Criticis Instruxit Rodney Potter Robinson. Paris: Librairie Ancienne Édouard Champion (1925). Pp. ix+80.

Professor Robinson's edition of Suetonius, *De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus* fulfils the promise made by him in his dissertation, *De Fragmenti Suetoniani de Grammaticis et Rhetoribus Codicum Nexu et Fide* (University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. VI, No. 1, November, 1920. Pp. 195. The Monograph was reviewed in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 18.136). In the Preface of his dissertation he gave notice of his intention to publish an edition of the *De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus*, an edition based on all of the nineteen known manuscripts.

When we recall that Osann, in his edition published in 1854, used but four manuscripts, Roth (1858) only five, Reifferscheid (1860) only six, and Rolfe (1914) only seven, and that Professor Robinson in his dissertation proved that the manuscripts are to be classified in a manner very different from the grouping formerly accepted, and that he designated as the two best codices one unknown before 1878 and another not highly regarded by his predecessors, it is evident that the present edition is of great importance. The argument concerning the interrelation and the comparative worth of the various manuscripts is not repeated from the dissertation, but the edition contains a very full apparatus criticus, with other notes dealing chiefly

¹⁰See e.g. E. B. Lease, *The Number Three, Mysterious, Mystic, Magic*, *Classical Philology* 14 (1919), 56-73.

¹¹See M. H. Morgan, *Greek and Roman Rain-Gods and Rain-Charms*, *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 32 (1901), 83-109. On pages 100-103 Professor Morgan discusses the Petronius passage. C. K. >.

with textual matters, such as the spelling of proper names, but also supplying references to passages in other writers in which certain of the grammarians and rhetoricians are discussed. There are four Appendices: I. De Editionibus Impressis (53-57); II. Apparatus Criticus Locupletior (58-65); III. Corrigenda in Apparatu Reifferscheidiano (66-67); IV. Bibliographica (68-73). There is an index of all readings adopted by Professor Robinson, but not found in Roth's edition, to supplement the Index Verborum C. Suetoni Tranquilli of Professors A. A. Howard and C. N. Jackson (74-75). The Index was published by the Harvard University Press, in 1922). Proper names are listed in a second index (76-80).

It is to be regretted that the text of this important source should be in so uncertain a state, and a cause of gratification that Professor Robinson has done so much to improve the text. A number of *loci desperati* he has helped by convincing emendations; in some instances he has produced good results by altering the punctuation. He still leaves four lacunae in the text, three of them not previously marked; but in the accompanying notes he gives the fruits of his study of the passages by suggesting how the gaps may be filled. Wherever Suetonius cites other authors the editor has supplied the reference in the body of the text, an especially great convenience in a work containing so many quotations. He has also subdivided chapters into sections for ease of reference.

The indexes prefixed to the text in half the manuscripts Professor Robinson regards (1) as older than the Codex Hersfeldensis, and therefore valuable in the reconstruction of the text, but far more recent than the time of Suetonius. Herein he differs from both Roth and Reifferscheid; the former regards them as possibly the work of Suetonius himself, the latter as certainly his.

There are a few minor misprints in the notes; there is, apparently, none in the text. The verification of a large number of references and the comparison of the text with the readings of Roth and Reifferscheid have failed to reveal any errors. The work has evidently been done with the scrupulous care which characterized the dissertation that preceded it.

HAMILTON COLLEGE

DONALD BLYTHE DURHAM

THE POSTURE OF RUNNERS IN GREEK ART

IN THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 22.46, left-hand column, Professor A. D. Fraser, in a review of Professor F. P. Johnson's book, *Lysippos*, discusses Professor Johnson's statement, "but in runners the advanced arm ought to be on the same side as the advanced foot, since it is both natural and usual in vase-paintings to bring the right or left arm and leg forward together. . . ." Professor Fraser writes thus: ". . . This is undoubtedly 'usual'; I recall at the moment only two vase-paintings—in Berlin and Toronto—showing the opposite. But the word 'natural' is absurd to anyone who has ever run a race. . . ."

This matter of the opposition of members, as it is technically called, and of the way it is portrayed in Greek vases has been of some interest to me. Recently (1925-1926) I spent a year in Europe studying the Maenad dance, as portrayed in Greek art. Of 357

representations of dancing Maenads, I found that exactly 30 portrayed opposition—i.e. the right leg and left arm are advanced together, or vice versa, as in nature. I mention the point in this connection because of the fact that the basic step of the Maenad dance was a run, or a fast walk; hence these representations may perhaps reasonably be considered along with the representations of runners. Of the rest, about 180 show what Mr. Johnson and Professor Fraser call the usual representation—that is, the right arm and right leg, or left arm and left leg, forward together; the others show neither arm advanced.

My point is, then, that, if we consider running dancing steps along with plain running, the correct portrayal of the opposition of members is found more often than Professor Fraser suggests. Vases by Hieron are especially noteworthy in this respect.

Professor Fraser is, of course, correct in his position that the opposition of members is natural. The violation of opposition, found so often in vase-paintings, probably arose from the inability of early artists to portray the crossing necessary to depict opposition correctly; the violation crystallized later into a convention of vase-painting. Even in the vases of Hieron it sometimes appears along with the correct representation, perhaps for variety.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

LILLIAN B. LAWLER

PROFESSOR MACKAIL ON THE INFLUENCE OF GREECE AND ROME

In Professor J. W. Mackail's *Lectures on Poetry*, 72¹, near the beginning of a paper on *The Aeneid*, one may find the following splendid passage:

"... Modern life owes its highest ideals, directly or indirectly, to the inspiration of Greece; it owes its whole structure and existence to the creation of Rome. And so also with the two languages; for while Greek is a language of unequalled beauty, flexibility, and strangeness, Latin is, to us and to all the inheritors of the Latin civilization, a second mother tongue".

My attention was called to this passage by Mr. Francis K. Ball, of the Editorial Department of Messrs. Ginn and Company.

CHARLES KNAPP

HERCULANEUM AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCRAP-BOOK

The New York Herald-Tribune for January 22, 1928, contained a two-column article on Herculaneum. The writer stated that "No one is allowed near the <new> excavations, and military police surround the district". One naturally sympathizes with Professor Maiuri in his solicitude to avoid premature or inaccurate publication. But I think I may make a useful suggestion to readers of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY who do not wish to wait for full official publication: why not keep a scrap-book of press clippings, since various news stories and pictures do slip out from time to time? For example, The New York Times of November 6, 1927, under the heading "Mural at Pompeii Shows First Pump", contained an article, not correct at every point, but still very useful. The Herald-Tribune of January 22, 1928, beside the article I have mentioned, contained in the rotogravure section a view of Lake Nemi (The Times recently described the project now under way for raising 'Caligula's Yacht'), a picture of The House of the Skeleton at Herculaneum, and one of a brazier discovered there. The Illustrated London News on October 29, 1927, had eight excellent new pictures from Pompeii and an article by Professor

¹London and New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1911. Pp. xiii + 334.

Halbherr. The Italian weekly called *Illustrazione* frequently contains admirable photographs of new work—e.g. it recently had four full-page views of the Theater of Marcellus as it is now beginning to look.

I am sure that there is much similar matter that I have not seen. I for one should appreciate notes which readers of *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* might send to me calling attention to such bits of information.

BROWN UNIVERSITY

BEN C. CLOUGH

OVES PELLITAE AGAIN HORACE, CARMINA 2. 6. 10

The *oves pellitae* of Horace, *Carmina* 2. 6.10 have been discussed in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 20.13, 93, 180, note 4, and 21. 33-34. The *Practical Book of Oriental Rugs*⁵, by Dr. G. Griffin Lewis (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1920), has this statement on page 69: "The quality of the pasturage plays a most important part in the quality of the wool. For this reason no better wool is to be found anywhere in the world than from the provinces of Khorasan and Kurdistan. Very often the sheep are covered with a sheet to protect and keep the wool in a lustrous condition". In the same paragraph we read, "The softest and most lustrous wool is that which is obtained by combing the sheep in winter and is known as *kurk*".

This is the only statement that I find in this connection on such protection of the sheep. Other writers on oriental rugs refer to combing the sheep to obtain the fine wool. How closely this practice corresponds to the plucking of the sheep referred to in Pliny, *N. H.* 8.191 and Varro, *Res Rusticae* 2.11.9, I do not know. The suggestion of Professor Knapp that the sheep were covered with skins as a protection from the weather (*THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 20.93) has at least a parallel in English literature, in Mrs. Gaskell's famous description of Miss Betsy's cow and its suit of gray flannel (Cranford, Chapter 1).

ILLINOIS WOMEN'S COLLEGE
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MARY JOHNSTON

A VERGIL READING CLUB¹

The interest of Washington teachers of Latin in the celebration of the Bimillennium Vergilianum has found expression in the establishment of a Vergil Reading Club. On alternate Monday afternoons a group of teachers assembles in some house, and reads in Latin and in English about a hundred and fifty lines of Vergil. In the interval between meetings each member reads an additional 150 lines. In this way the Club will complete in two years the reading of Vergil's works. The reading began with the Eclogues. The Club is now in the midst of the Georgics, thrilled by such passages as Vergil's panegyric of Italy.

POWELL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

MABEL C. HAWES

THE CLASSICAL CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA

The 200th regular meeting of The Classical Club of Philadelphia was held at the Princeton Club, on Friday evening, December 7, with thirty members present. The report of the Prize Committee showed that, at the annual competitive prize examination held in May last, the Boys' Prize was won by William H. Knapp, of the Central High School, and the Girls' Prize by Miss Mabel McMahon, of the Girls' High School. The Secretary gave a brief history of the Club from its founding, and read certain statistics which he had prepared dealing with the activities and the per-

¹This notice is printed to indicate what has been done and what may be done. It will not be possible, however, to print in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* other notices of such Reading Clubs. C. K. >.

sonnel of the Club. It is not often that a small literary Club, such as this, has continued its activities unbroken for more than thirty-three years. The paper of the evening, entitled *Cuckoos*, was read by Mr. J. F. Gummere, of the William Penn Charter School. Many of the references in the Classics to this bird were discussed, as were its habits and the mythology which has gathered about it.

B. W. MITCHELL, *Secretary*

THE SORTES BIBLICAE AND THE WORLD WAR

In *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 21.188, Miss Helen A. Loane, in the course of an article on The Sortes Vergilianae, made reference to their use by a certain classical scholar during the World War (the matter had been mentioned by me in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 18.33-34). In Margot Asquith, *An Autobiography* 4.104 (New York, George H. Doran Company, 1922), one may find a quotation from Mrs. Asquith's diary, December 31, 1914, as follows:

... When I opened my Bible tonight my eye rested on this text:

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down with you having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."—Rev. xii, 12.

There is nothing to show that Mrs. Asquith had knowingly appealed to the Bible in the manner in which the Sortes Vergilianae were used, or as the Bible was so long used. But at once she applied the passage, in a page and a half of moralizing, to the conditions that obtained then, in the World War (with the Germans singled out as exponents of frightfulness), and to conditions as they had obtained among her own countrymen before the War.

CHARLES KNAPP

CLASSICAL ARTICLES IN NON-CLASSICAL PERIODICALS

American Historical Review—October, 1928, Byzantine Imperialism in Egypt, Arthur E. R. Boak ["a survey of the period from Diocletian to the capture of Alexandria by the Arabs in 641 A. D."]; Review, favorable, by A. T. Olmstead, of Eduard Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, Band II; Review, favorable, by A. B. W<est>, of Benjamin D. Meritt, *The Athenian Calendar in the Fifth Century*; Review, favorable, by Clifford H. Moore, of Michael I. Rostovtzeff, *Mystic Italy*; Minor notices.

Atlantic Monthly—October, 1928, Hannibal and Rome: A New Reading of History, Captain B. H. Liddell Hart.

Edinburgh Review—October, 1928, The Realm of Minos, R. C. Bosanquet [review, favorable, of Sir Arthur Evans, *The Palace of Minos at Knossos*, Volume II]; The Roman Legions, C. W. C. Oman [review, favorable, of H. M. D. Parker, *The Roman Legions*: "practically covers the administration of the Roman regular army, as opposed to its auxiliaries, from the time of Marius' great re-organization... down to the death of Marcus Aurelius"]; Medieval Latin Poetry, F. A. Wright.

Hibbert Journal—October, 1928, Review, very favorable, by G. D. Hicks, of A. E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*.

Litteris—September, 1928, Review, favorable, by Martin P. Nilsson, of H. J. Rose, *Primitive Culture in Italy* [includes a detailed discussion of the intercalary month].

Revue Historique—July-August, 1928, La Question de Droit entre César et le Sénat, A. Perpillou [the question was one of might, not of law].

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